

12/1/71

PROPOSED PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE PLAN  
FOR PENN HILLS

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## Introduction

This Recreation Plan is a major policy statement of the Mayor and Council of Penn Hills. The Plan was prepared by the Penn Hills Department of Planning and Economic Development after receiving recommendations from the Recreation Advisory Board, the Recreation Department, and the Penn Hills Planning Commission. The Plan strives to provide quality recreational areas and facilities for all residents and includes goals for upgrading current facilities as well as recommendations for new acquisition and development. It also addresses related issues such as the preservation of open space, conservation, and the protection of natural amenities through land use development controls.

This Plan will serve as a guide to the Mayor and Council as they render decisions related to recreation and open space. It should be considered whenever capital budgets are adopted, when land development applications are processed, and when opportunities arise to apply for federal and state funding assistance. This Plan, however, should not be construed as a controlling or binding document on decisions related to parks and recreation. This Plan is a major policy statement and it should eventually be incorporated into the Penn Hills Comprehensive Plan. But the plan is fallible and dated and as such should remain flexible and constantly revised.

## Existing Facilities/Inventory & Analysis

We begin with an analysis of existing facilities. This section includes a table which lists and classifies park facilities. We compare these to generally accepted federal standards and draw a few conclusions. We also list programs currently offered by the Recreation Department and private and semi-public facilities available in the community.

The following table indicates that Penn Hills now owns twenty park properties varying in size from one half to over one hundred acres. We have a total of 246.2 acres of parkland most of which is developed for recreational purposes. Within a reasonably short drive, we have the City of Pittsburgh's Schenley Park and Allegheny County's Boyce and Hartwood Acres parks.

In other sections of this Plan, we will make specific recommendations for each of these parks.

EXISTING PENN HILLS PARKLAND

Park	Acres	Classification	
1. Aber	1	Undeveloped	
2. Bon Air	1.5	Neighborhood Park	1
3. Duff	9	Neighborhood Park	2
4. Friendship	45	District Park	3
5. Galetton Drive Property	6	Undeveloped	
6. Idaho	5	Undeveloped	
7. Jefferson	14	Undeveloped	
8. Lee	8	Neighborhood Park	4
9. Loretta	1	Undeveloped	
10. Martinique	4	Playlot	5
11. McKinley Field	3	Neighborhood Park	6
12. Meadow	1	Playlot	7
13. Municipal Ballfield	2	Playlot	8
14. Multi-Purpose Center	2	Playlot	9
15. Pat Seneca	3	Playlot	10
16. Penn Hills	102	District Park	11
17. Pennview	.6	Playlot	12
18. Rivendale Plan	4	Undeveloped	
19. Ross	.5	Neighborhood Park	13
20. Santiago	5	Undeveloped	
21. Springwood	.6	Undeveloped	
22. Universal	30	District Park	14
23. Vista View	<u>11</u>	Undeveloped	

Total 259.2

BALONO 534-7-176 87.06

346.26 139.66 UNDEVELOPED

211.6

Outside Penn Hills

Schenley

Regional

Boyce

Regional

Hartwood Acres

Regional

Other

Crescent Hills Civic Club

Neighborhood Park

Nine Mile Island

Conservation

Rosedale Civic Association

Conservation

Greek Orthodox Church (Marathon Field)

Ballfield

PENN HILLS RECREATION FACILITIES  
AS COMPARED TO FEDERAL STANDARDS

Facility	Standard	Existing Actual #	Deficiency	Comments
Ballfields (Softball/Baseball)	1/4,000	10	3	
Football	-	1	-	
Soccer	-	2	-	Includes Wm. McKinley
Tennis Courts	1/2,000	10	17	
Basketball	1/500	5	95	False Deficiency, Backyard Hoops
Skating	1/30,000	0	1-2	Both Ice and Roller
Swimming Pools				Private Swim Clubs & Linton School Available
25 Meter	1/10,000	0	-	
50 Meter	1/20,000	0	-	Boyce Wave Pool
Neighborhood Center	1/10,000	0	-	VFD's, Garden Clubs
Community Centers	1/25,000	3	+1	
Shooting Range	1/50,000	0	1	
Golf Course	1/25,000	0	2	4 Private
Tot Lots/Neighborhood Parks	125 Acres	69 Acres	56 Acres	
District Parks	125 Acres	177 Acres	+52 Acres	P.H.'s Park, Friendship & Universal
Large Urban Parks	2,500 Acres	NA	NA	Boyce, Highland, Schenley Lawrence Estate

Based on the above chart which presents the actual number of each type of recreational facility in comparison to a recommended standard for Penn Hills, it is apparent that the Municipality is not adequately equipped with recreational facilities. Although private facilities and school facilities are not included in these figures, the Municipality is still relatively "deficient" in recreation facilities.

While such standards are useful, they are not meant to indicate that the exact number must be developed. They are simply a direction in which to strive. More important is to match recreation facilities to the types that Penn Hills residents would be most likely to utilize, and to look for hidden meanings behind the deficiencies. The following are general comments:

1. Penn Hills appears to have a genuine deficiency in tennis courts but tennis may have peaked in the early 70's in popularity.
2. Swimming is another deficiency but this is somewhat offset by Linton School, private swim clubs, and Boyce Park's wave pool. The expense of private clubs and Boyce Park may, however, be a real hardship to many Penn Hills families.
3. The table shows a surplus in community centers but there are two in Lincoln Park, the extreme western section of Penn Hills, and one in Point Breeze, the extreme north. Two operate out of old school buildings and all three have limited resources.
4. The deficiency under shooting ranges could perhaps be offset with public use of the Police Department shooting range in the basement of the Municipal Building.
5. The ballfield deficiency has certainly been recently lowered with the construction of Friendship Park and the table does not consider increased usage when ballfields are equipped with lighting.
6. The basketball deficiency, we feel, is a false number since there are countless backyard hoops in the community.
7. Skating, both ice and roller skating, appears to be a genuine deficiency in Penn Hills.
8. Golf courses are abundant in Penn Hills but they are all private and beyond the means of low and moderate income families. A public golf course, on the other-hand, is most likely beyond the means of local government to provide.

9. In terms of acreage, we seem to be up to standard with community parks or district parks but low on the neighborhood and tot lot scale. The deficiency suggests that we might change our focus by expanding or developing new neighborhood parks.
10. If and when a proposed recreation complex is reconsidered, it appears that swimming, skating, a ballfield, and tennis courts would be facilities that should be incorporated.



Private Facilities

A. Swimming

1. Twin Oaks - Olympic Swim & Health Club
2. Highland Aqua Club - McAllister Drive
3. Penn Aqua Club - Lynnwood Drive
4. Rosedale Beach Club - Third Street
5. Churchill Country Club - Beulah Road
6. Alcoma Country Club - Saltsburg Road
7. Green Oaks Country Club - Verona Road

B. Bowling Alleys

1. Guys & Dolls
2. Rosedale
3. Melody Lanes

C. Health & Fitness Clubs

1. Scandinavian Health Club

D. Other (Public/Semi-Public)

1. YMCA
2. Lincoln Park Community Center
3. Lincoln Road - Multi-Purpose Center
4. Wm. McKinley Community Center
5. Various VFD's and Garden Clubs
6. Senior Citizen Center

SCHOOL DISTRICT FACILITIES

(Available to the Public)

Washington

Summer playground conducted by Municipal Recreation Department, evening open gym, playfield, ballfield.

Dible

Summer playground, evening open gym, ballfield.

Shenandoah

Summer playground, evening open gym, ballfield.

Forbes

Evening open gym, playfield.

Wm. McKinley Center

Evening open gym, playfield.

William Penn

Summer playground, evening open gym, play area.

Lincoln Park Center

Summer playground, evening open gym.

Penn Hebron

Adult Education Program, summer playground, evening open gym, practice field, ballfield, football field, basketball court, track, cross country course, bleachers.

Linton Intermediate

Adult Education Program, evening gymnasium program, summer playground, evening open gym, practice field, ballfield, football field, track, indoor swimming pool, bleachers.

Penn Hills Senior High

Adult Education Program, evening gymnasium program, ballfield, football field, track, weight conditioning room, bleachers, concession building

EXISTING PROGRAMS

PENN HILLS RECREATION DEPARTMENT

1. Adult Aerobic Classes - On Going throughout the year
2. Adult Aerobics (Low Impact) - On Going
3. Adult Basketball League - Winter Program
4. Adult Softball League - Summer
5. Art Show - Summer
6. Art Classes - Summer
7. Arts & Craft Fair (Playground) - Summer
8. Basketball Camp - Summer
9. Baton Classes - Fall
10. Benefit Basketball (Donkey) Game - Spring
11. Bike Rally (Playground) - Summer
12. Boys Jr. Olympics (Playground) - Summer
13. Christmas Movie - Winter
14. Christmas Tree Light Up - Winter
15. Pet Show (Playground) - Summer
16. Elementary Basketball - Winter
17. Field Day (Playground) - Summer
18. Friday Night Exceptional Program (Shining Arrow) - Fall & Winter
19. Football Field Permit - February
20. Frisbee Golf (Playground) - Summer
21. Frisbee Tournament (Playground) - Summer
22. Girls Basketball Camp - Summer
23. Girls Basketball League - Fall & Winter
24. Girls Jr. All-Star Game - Summer
25. Girls Jr. Softball Tournament - Summer
26. Girls Jr. Softball League - Summer
27. Girls Mite Tournament - Summer
28. Girls Softball Banquet - Summer
29. Girls Sr. All-Star Game - Summer
30. Girls Sr. Softball League - Summer

31. Girls Sr. Softball Tournament - Summer
32. Girls Tee Ball League - Summer
33. Halloween Movie Party - Fall
34. Sr. Citizens Harvest Celebration - Fall
35. Holiday Basketball Tournament - Winter
36. Hot Shot (Playground) - Summer
37. Hot Shot Tournament (Playground) - Summer (Local)
38. Hot Shot Tournament (Regional) - Fall
39. Hunter Safety - Fall
40. Jr. High Basketball - Fall & Winter
41. Jr. Wrestling Program - Fall & Winter
42. Math Classes - Summer
43. Memorial Day 10K Race - Spring
44. Mud Olympics - Summer
45. Music Classes - Summer
46. Penn Hills Sports Hall of Fame - Spring
47. Physical Fitness (Adult) - Winter
48. Playgrounds (13) - Summer
49. Pride In Penn Hills (Clean Up) - Spring
50. Reading Classes - Summer
51. Self Defense Classes - Spring & Fall
52. Sr. Citizen Picnic - Summer
53. Sr. High Basketball League - Winter
54. Shining Arrow - On Going
55. Shining Arrow Fishing Trip - Summer
56. Snowman Contest - Winter
57. Softball Coaches Clinic - Summer
58. Softball Officials Clinic - Summer
59. Softball Association - On Going
60. Tennis Classes - Summer
61. Tennis Clinic - Summer
62. Tennis Tournament (Over 35) - Summer
63. Tennis Reservations - Spring & Summer
64. Tennis Tournament - Summer
65. Volleyball Camp - Summer
66. Youth Employment - Summer & Fall
67. Generic Golf Outing - Spring

68. Picnic Reservations - On Going
69. Baseball Field Permits - Spring
70. Softball Permits - Spring
71. Memorial Day Parade - Spring
72. Gymnastic Camp - Summer

Recommendations - Existing Parkland

1. Aber Park - Improve maintenance, erect signage, increase neighborhood involvement. Landscape the upper portion and construct an appropriate sidewalk and walkway to the play equipment. Replace or paint equipment.
2. Bon Air Playground - Improve maintenance and drainage. No further development.
3. Duff Park - Improve maintenance, consider expansion by acquiring property to the north. Develop as a neighborhood park with emphasis on activities for small children. Resurface or recondition the four tennis courts.
4. Friendship Park - Install lighting for two baseball fields, the soccer field, and the football field with priority to the football field. Construct a second concession stand and storage area. Install additional play equipment and landscaping. Consider the acquisition of additional land (the Haffey property) and the dedication of other land whenever the Greenridge Plan of Lots is further developed.
5. Galeton Drive - Consider sale to adjacent property owners.
6. Idaho Avenue - Reserve this land for future unknown recreational use. Coordinate with activities at Shenandoah School and expand through development exactions, if possible.
7. Jefferson Road Park - Improve maintenance of the ballfield and improve the entrance drive.
8. Lee Drive Playground - Improve equipment and general maintenance. No further development.
9. Loretta Drive - Reserve this land for future unknown recreational use. Expand through development exactions, if possible.
10. Martinique Park - Erect signs to identify the park site and increase neighborhood support and use. Develop and improve pedestrian access and install equipment.
11. Meadow Park - Improve maintenance, replace or repair equipment, no further development.
12. Multi-Purpose Center - Erect an identification sign, continue to coordinate activities with non-profit organizations involved in the operation of the building. Consider the erection of an additional shelter, and the acquisition of additional land.
13. Municipal Field - Improve maintenance of both the field and the entrance road. Name the field and erect identification sign. No further development recommended.

13. Pat Seneca Park - Improve maintenance, increase neighborhood support and use.
14. Penn Hills Park - Improve ballfields and general maintenance. Construct additional shelters and acquire additional open space as opportunities arise.
15. Pennview Park - Improve maintenance and erect an identification sign. No further development.
16. Rivendale Plan - Consider development of a tot lot and/or activities related to Marathon Field.
17. Ross Park - Improve maintenance. Install some new equipment. No further development.
18. Santiago Street - Meet with neighborhood organizations to decide between this site and the Lincoln Park Community Center property for the immediate development of a new neighborhood playground. Otherwise, reserve this land for future recreational use. Consider the acquisition of adjacent WPJWA and/or Jendoco property. Also, consider the use of this property as a temporary land fill (clean fill only) as a means of increasing the size of usable land.
19. Springwood Drive - Consider selling this property to adjacent homeowners or the highest bidder. Maintain in its present condition. Do not develop.
20. Universal Park - Improve general maintenance and erect an identification sign. Reserve three (3) acres of this site for possible police/fire training center. Develop a leaf composting site along Kerstem Lane. Consider expansion by acquiring USX property through purchase or dedication. Expand the cul-de-sac parking area and build one additional shelter. Consider the erection of a police K-9 training center building.
21. Vista View - Consider the development of a hiking trail through this property to the Allegheny River. Otherwise, preserve this land as undeveloped open space woodland.

### Conservation and Open Space

In spite of the fact that Penn Hills is a developed suburban community, there still remains a few significant areas where conservation of open space is an important issue. The rolling hills in our community have always served well to define and buffer our neighborhoods with woodland and the community's residents have voiced their concern for preservation.

Since 1980, the Municipality has made significant progress in terms of conservation. The Planning Department introduced conservation zoning in 1980 and expanded areas further in 1985. Land development ordinances have also been updated to control and regulate the removal of woodland. These efforts have afforded some protection for the steep slope woodlands along Allegheny River Boulevard, Snively Run, Lime Hollow Road, Coal Hollow Road, Verona Road, Nadine Road, Indian Creek Road, Hunter Road, and McCully Drive.

Other areas are protected through public ownership such as Nine Mile Island (Western PA. Conservancy), Vista View Park, Rivendale Plan, Penn Hills Park (Municipality of Penn Hills), and the Homestead Road to Sandy Creek Trail (Rosedale Civic Association).

### Recommendations/Conservation and Open Space

1. Consider the expansion of Penn Hills Community Park through the acquisition of additional steep sloped woodland to the east.
2. Encourage and promote the development of hiking trails through conservation areas whenever feasible.
3. Consider the expansion of conservation zoning classifications whenever comprehensive zoning map changes are proposed.
4. Promote the preservation and conservation of woodland and other natural features through land development regulations.



Recommendations/Recreation Advisory Board

The Municipality is fortunate to have an active Recreation Advisory Board composed of citizen volunteers with a wide variety of backgrounds and a common interest in improving recreational opportunities. The following is a summary of the Board's recommendations:

1. New Parks on Expansions:
  - A. Saltsburg Road (near the School Bus Garage)- the Paluselli Property
  - B. The Haffey Farm - Indiana Road
  - C. The Churchill Academy - Beulah Road and Mulberry Street
  - D. Vacant acreage between the Universal Moose and Washington School
  - E. USS Realty Property - Universal Park
2. Improved Maintenance - All Parks
3. Nature Trails and Bikeways - Introduce to Recreation Program
4. Fishing - Stock the Pond at Penn Hills Park and Consider Damning Plum Creek
5. The Recreation Complex - Update the 1983 GWSM Study and Renew Public Hearings

The continued and expanded involvement of the Board will be essential to implementing any aspect of this plan.

## Short Range Action Plan

This plan attempts to be comprehensive in terms of analysis of all issues related to parks, recreation, and open space. When it comes to implementation, however, we want to be specific, realistic, and action oriented over a short range -- two to three years. In another section, we will be more general, more ambitious, and less accurate in statements of long range possibilities.

We have certain givens. We know that we will not be able to solve all of our problems and will certainly have limited resources. But hopefully by directing and focusing our attention to the following action plan, we can create major positive impacts. We propose the following seven activities:

1. Riverfront Park - Develop land on the Allegheny River for boating, fishing, and a park area. This property is located at the point where Sandy Creek joins the Allegheny River.

Currently, there are no sites in Penn Hills that allow public access to the Allegheny River. Several problems must be addressed before Penn Hills can develop this land, the first of which is access to the property. Consolidated Rail Corporation (Conrail) tracks run along the river, and Conrail must grant a right-of-way access over the tracks, if the property is to be developed.

Acquire title to the land along the river. This land is also owned by Conrail. Currently, the Planning Department is attempting to receive permission from Conrail to survey the property. In the future, the Department will arrange meetings with Conrail regarding acquisition of the property.

The proposed time schedule for acquiring and developing the property is as follows: acquire in 1990, develop access road, parking, boat launch, fishing area, and a picnic shelter in 1991. In the future, the Department would like to construct a biking-hiking trail to Verona and on to Penn Hills Park; the trail would follow an abandoned railroad line along Plum Creek. An additional bikeway could be constructed to connect with a proposed City of Pittsburgh park at the intersection of Washington Boulevard and Allegheny River Boulevard, and also connect to the Pittsburgh Zoo. The Allegheny River is an asset to the community and it is hoped that the residents of Penn Hills will be able to enjoy the river more fully in the future through the development of a public park.

Finally, Nine Mile Island is an area that is owned by the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy. This land will be used either as conservation/preservation land or developed into a park.

2. Friendship Park - We propose to dramatically increase the capacity of ballfields by lighting four fields at Friendship Park over the next two years. We have already applied for matching State funding and have been selected as a "substitute candidate" which means that we have an outside possibility of funding come the Spring of 1990 and, if not, a good possibility of funding in the Fall of 1990 or Spring of 1991. We should begin by contracting for the design and preparation of bid specifications as soon as local capital funds are available. The Planning Department can solicit proposals from design firms immediately upon the adoption of this plan and/or approval of Council.

The feasibility of utilizing the Seneca lights (currently in storage) must be explored along with state of the art new equipment. Plans must then go before the Planning Commission and Council for approval followed by solicitations of construction bids. Installation could begin as early as the Summer of 1990.

3. Maintenance - The Recreation Advisory Board, the Recreation Department, and citizens at large have repeated the theme of improved maintenance as a priority plan recommendation. The Municipality must improve our maintenance capabilities and we suggest that this be done as follows:
  - A. Provide the Recreation Department with increased financial resources designed specifically for contracting additional maintenance work.
  - B. Increase the Recreation Advisory Board's and organized recreation group's involvement in maintenance issues. Promote and expand organizational responsibilities such as the Baseball Association taking care of infields and the Football Association maintaining football fields.
  - C. Solicit the involvement of neighborhood organizations in the maintenance of tot lots and neighborhood parks.
  - D. Clarify and coordinate responsibilities shared by the Recreation Department and the Department of Public Works.
  - E. Systematically inspect park equipment at least every six months and repair and replace as required.

4. Lincoln Park Recreation - The Municipality needs to expand its system of neighborhood parks and occasionally funding opportunities will match with neighborhood interest.

Such is the case in Lincoln Park where residents have approached the Municipality about the need for a neighborhood park. Two potential sites have been identified by the Planning Department. One is located at the Lincoln Park School; the building is currently used by the Lincoln Park Community Center, Inc. The second potential site is an undeveloped lot at the end of Santiago Street.

The lot behind the Lincoln Park School could be used as a playfield and basketball courts could be constructed. The Santiago site is in need of "fill" before it could be utilized as a park. The first step would be to pipe an existing stream on the property in order that fill could be placed over the stream. The site could then be made available for dumping clean landfill. Basketball courts, play equipment, and a playfield would be constructed on the property. In the event that the residents of Lincoln Park chose the Lincoln Park School site to be developed, the Santiago site would continue to be held undeveloped.

Public meetings will be held in Lincoln Park to determine the most desirable location for the park. It is anticipated that these meetings will take place in the Winter of 1989-90, with development to begin in the Spring of 1990. All funding for this project is from the Federal Community Development Block Grant Program.

5. Duff Park Tennis Courts - The Recreation Department has identified surface treatment of the four existing tennis courts in Duff Park as a high priority. The courts are certainly playable in their present condition but the winter freeze/thaw cycle will soon bring about the need for major repair. The Planning Department has already submitted an application for State funds without success but future applications will be submitted whenever the opportunity arises. If necessary, Council will be called upon to support this project with local capital funds. Bid specification and contract should be prepared in the Spring of 1990 with resurfacing in the Summer.
6. Exactions - Occasionally opportunities may arise to require private developers to support the expansion of recreation opportunities or at least provide additional open space. Council is expected to update development ordinances in the Fall of 1989 in line with PA Act 170, the Municipalities Planning Code. These ordinances will require certain private developers to either dedicate and develop open space or pay fees in lieu of dedication. The Planning Department will rigorously enforce these ordinances whenever opportunities arise.

For example, if a new residential subdivision is developed, the builder will be required to set aside a certain percentage of the land for parks and recreation. He may also choose as an option to fully develop the land and instead pay a per lot fee which would be set aside for improvements to existing park facilities located near the new subdivision. The merits of various options will be reviewed and approved by the Planning Commission during the subdivision review process.

Although this tool provides excellent opportunities to municipalities experiencing rapid growth, this is currently not the case in Penn Hills. We seek not to unduly raise the expectations of our residents but simply to inform all that we will take advantage of opportunities that arise and indirectly provide assurance that developers and new residents share the cost of meeting the increased demand created by growth.

7. Existing Programs and Facilities - There's a common phrase "if it ain't broke don't fix it" which applies for the most part to the Recreation Department's programs. We may lack in facilities and maintenance but the Recreation Department continues to receive high ratings for the operation of a wide variety of programs for residents of all ages. We suggest, however, that operations such as this not be taken for granted. It requires a tremendous amount of energy to run recreation programs, and all those responsible must continue to monitor program quality. The following are important elements:
  - A. Continue to provide sufficient financial resources. Recreation budgets are always under attack during periods of financial stress.
  - B. Make sure that revenues increase with operating costs. Search for State and Federal grant opportunities.
  - C. Do not become complacent. Periodically conduct opinion surveys for all current recreation programs and adjust programs accordingly.
  - D. Seek opportunities for increasing volunteerism.
  - E. Maintain close working relationships between organizations, the Advisory Board, the School District, and the Recreation Department.

With the exception of Council's budgetary powers, the Recreation Department must ultimately take charge of coordinating and controlling all of the above activities. The action plan is that we simply do whatever it takes to maintain the current level of excellence.

## Long Range Possibilities

This plan is action oriented and there is no doubt that the preceding section, the Short Range Action Plan, is the heart and soul of this document. We owe it to ourselves, however, to at least make some statements about issues that we know will be publicly discussed, about facilities that we would like to have but know we can't afford, and some other possibilities that in the long range, are quite feasible. We seek not to create false expectations but, on the other hand, be more ambitious and farsighted. Here they are:

1. The Recreation Complex - Several years ago, the Municipality seriously explored the possibility of a multi-million dollar recreation complex. Consultants were hired and surveys were conducted. Reports indicated that a facility was feasible. That it should include a swimming pool, skating rink, aerobics, racquetball courts, and other facilities all under one roof on an unspecified site. The public, on the other hand, was divided. Organized recreation groups and younger families tended to be in favor and senior citizens and others were opposed. A ballot poll showed 2-1 opposed.

We suggest that the Municipality continue to investigate and explore opportunities as they arise. Funding opportunities may develop. The private sector may respond to needs and people's attitudes may change. Private recreation organizations will most likely have to take the lead. If a site becomes available, followed by new funding possibilities and/or private section interest, then we should not be reluctant to reassess the level of public support and take appropriate action.

2. New Acquisition/Expansion - There are certain lands that are clearly identifiable as expansion possibilities for our public park system. We should consider the following possibilities and take advantage of opportunities as they occur:

- A. The Jackson Property - The site is located in the eastern section of Penn Hills near Meadow and Pike Street. It is most likely the single most property in Penn Hills of historical value. It includes a log cabin built in 1775 and another farmhouse built in 1869 and surrounding undeveloped land. The property has potential for combining recreational, cultural, and historical programs. The Penn Hills Historical Committee has recommended public acquisition. The Penn Hills Council on the Arts has expressed interest in utilizing the farmhouse for their programs and recreational uses of the land could easily be combined.

- B. Marathon Field - The Greek Orthodox Church owns property in the vicinity of Jefferson Heights Road and Marathon Drive currently referred to as Marathon Field. This field has been informally used for little league baseball for many years but recently the land has been put on the market with some interest from private developers. The only way to preserve the continued recreational use of this property is public acquisition. The Municipality should begin by contacting the owners and informally discussing either dedication or acquisition.
- C. Haffey Farm - Property known as the Haffey Farm sits adjacent to Friendship Park and Indiana Road. This property presents interesting expansion possibilities for Friendship Park. Mrs. Haffey has already expressed an interest in selling the property but, with limited financial resources, the Municipality has yet to respond.
- D. USS Realty - Universal Park sits adjacent to hundreds of acres of vacant land owned by USS Realty. Any expansion of Universal Park would be desirable for both active and passive recreational use, and we suggest that all possibilities be explored including dedication, acquisition, and the requirement that open space adjacent to Universal Park be reserved concurrent with future private development.
3. Alcoma-on-the-Green - In 1975, the Municipality approved a conditional use for the construction of an 1100 unit apartment complex with many conditions. One of these conditions required the dedication of five acres of land for a ballfield. Since that time, only 225 units have been constructed and the five acre site has yet to be dedicated. The owners have been informed that no additional permits will be issued until this requirement is met. The Municipality can expect, therefore, to offset some of the demand for ballfields at some unknown future date.
4. Trails - An abandoned railroad right-of-way follows Plum Creek from Milltown to the bottom of Hunter Road. In 1978, the Planning Department submitted a grant application for 90% funding to convert this right-of-way to either a bikeway or hiking trail. The application went up against strong nationwide competition and was not approved and subsequently monies were no longer available.

The landowner, Penn Central Transportation Co., would not consider a transfer of ownership and the project died.

The thought of a bikeway from Milltown to the Highland Park Zoo is, however, periodically discussed and the Planning Department will continue to monitor funding possibilities. In spite of our hilly topography, residents occasionally express an interest in developing bikeways and as this support increases, the Recreation and Planning Departments should be prepared to explore other possibilities as well.

5. Miscellaneous Park Improvements - The short range action plan specifically identifies park improvements for the next two to three years. If we look farther, however, certain good possibilities are worth mentioning:
  - A. Multi-Purpose Center - Adjacent to the Lincoln Road Multi-Purpose Center is an existing tot lot, tennis court, and picnic shelter. Adjacent to this are 40 plus acres of vacant land owned by the Marcap Corporation. Acquisition of more land at this site could possibly be achieved with the use of Federal Community Development Funds.
  - B. Loretta Drive Park - The Municipality owns approximately one acre of undeveloped land at Loretta Drive with considerable privately owned adjacent land. There is a genuine need for a neighborhood playground in this area and this project should be considered as funding becomes available.
  - C. Equipment - Just about every existing municipal park could use additional equipment, either climbing equipment and swings for young children or recreation equipment for older children.
  - D. Picnic Shelters - Penn Hills and Universal Park could use one additional picnic shelter. Council chose not to install shelters at Friendship Park after adjacent neighborhood residents testified in opposition.
  - E. Friendship Park - After ballfield lighting, a second concession stand and additional landscaping for Friendship Park should receive high priority status for the long range.



- F. Duff Park - After the tennis courts are resurfaced, the Municipality should meet with the School District and consider the expansion of this park. It is recommended that this park preserve, however, its "neighborhood" character and that future activities center around those designed for young children.

There are many other "long range" possibilities, of course. We can only suggest that they be addressed with periodic updates of this plan. The plan itself must always remain flexible and adjust itself to changing needs.

## PENN HILLS PARKS, RECREATION & OPEN SPACE PLAN

### The Plan in a Nutshell

#### Short Range Action Plan

1. Riverfront Park - Investigate the potential for a new park (fishing, boating, picnicing) at Sandy Creek Road and Allegheny River Boulevard. If feasible, buy the land in 1990 and develop in 1991.
2. Ballfield Lighting - Design lighting plans for two baseball fields, the soccer field, and the football field for Friendship Park. Design in 1990, install late 1990 and early 1991. If budgeting becomes a problem, give priority to the football field.
3. Maintenance - Improve maintenance through whatever means are possible-- additional municipal staff, contracting, or organized volunteers. Consider increased user fees or other ways to generate revenue. Apply improved maintenance immediately to all parks.
4. Lincoln Park Recreation - With the use of federal community development funds develop a new playground in Lincoln Park, either behind the Lincoln Park Community Center or Santiago Street. Meet with neighborhood organizations in the winter of 1989 to design the park. Develop in the spring of 1990.
5. Duff Park Tennis Courts - Install a new surface for the four existing Duff Park tennis courts.
6. Exactions - Implement the new provisions of land development ordinances immediately. When new development occurs, require either the dedication of open space or fees in lieu of dedication.
7. Existing Programs & Facilities - The programs and facilities currently offered are considered to be excellent. The Recreation Department needs continued financial and organizational support to maintain this level of excellence.

#### Long Range Possibilities

1. The Recreation Complex - Continue to investigate all possibilities toward the development of a complex containing indoor swimming, skating, racquetball, aerobics, and many other activities under one roof. Reassess the level of public support for this type of facility and take appropriate action.
2. New Acquisitions/Expansion Consider the following possibilities and take advantage of opportunities as they occur:

- A. The Jackson Property - Historical & Recreation
  - B. Marathon Field - Public acquisition
  - C. Haffey Farm - Expansion of Friendship Park
  - D. USS Realty - Expansion of Universal Park
3. Alcoma-on-the-Green - An additional 5 acres will be dedicated to Penn Hills when additional building permits are approved for this development.
4. Trails - A system of hiking trails and bikeways will be explored. A good possibility being an abandoned R/R right-of-way from Milltown to Verona and then from Verona to the Highland Park Zoo.
5. Miscellaneous Park Improvements:
- A. Multi-Purpose Center - Expand, acquire property
  - B. Develop a neighborhood park at Idaho and Loretta
  - C. Replace outdated equipment and furniture at all parks
  - D. Install additional picnic shelters at Penn Hills and Universal Park.
  - E. Build an additional concession stand and provide more landscaping-Friendship Park
  - F. Consider the expansion of Duff Park with additional neighborhood/young children activities